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THE BIBLICAL WORLD

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Editorial

A FORWARD LOOK

It is with a freshly quickened sense of the loss which they have sustained, both personally and in their work as scholars and teachers, that the editors inscribe upon this number of the *Biblical World* the phrase "Founded by William Rainey Harper," in place of "William Rainey Harper, Editor," which has stood there for twenty-three years. It is suitable that, in formally assuming that editorial responsibility which till his lamented death they shared with President Harper under his leadership, they should indicate to their readers the general policy in accordance with which the journal will be conducted in the future.

The name, and that for which the name stands, will remain unchanged. The *Biblical World* will be devoted to the promotion and improvement of the study of the Bible. It is our conviction that in the books which have for centuries been accepted as the Bible of the Christian church there is contained a revelation of religious truth which the world still needs and will never cease to need. We believe that it is for the good of men everywhere that these books should be read and studied—by scholars, with scholarly thoroughness and exhaustiveness; by Christian preachers, in reverent search for the message which they shall give to the people; by the student of good literature, for their literary beauty, their elevated and elevating thought; by busy men and women, for comfort, inspiration, and spur to right action; by the young, that they may set out upon their careers with high ideals and fixed purpose to live strongly and nobly; by the children, that they may early come under the charm of the

truth-suggesting stories which these books contain, and the elevating atmosphere in which they move. The *Biblical World* will not be a journal of technical biblical research. But it will aim, in all ways that are legitimate, save those that make their appeal solely to professional scholars, to promote the study of the Bible and to improve the methods of its study.

The *Biblical World* will continue to illustrate the historical spirit in the study of the Bible and of religion. That solid results for theology and for life are to be gained by historical study and only thus, is regarded as established beyond the necessity for further debate. What remains to be done is faithfully and patiently to prosecute such study, and to promote it by the publication of its reasonably assured results. Novel views, brilliant suggestions not yet subjected to the winnowing criticism of scholarship, will occupy small space, if any, in the pages of this journal. Its mission, conceived by the editors, is not to be a bulletin of first announcement for all new solutions of old problems. While never making agreement with our own personal opinions the criterion for acceptance or rejection of articles offered by our contributors, we shall always aim so to conduct our journal that he who reads may be assured that what he reads is not the vagary of some adventurous mind, but the result of study which, having run the gauntlet of criticism, has received the approval of a goodly number of scholars. If we sometimes exceed these limits, it will be to include what seems to us a specially helpful suggestion of a sober-minded scholar.

The *Biblical World* will stand for progress. Its editors believe that much has been accomplished in the last twenty years—to go no farther back—toward a better understanding of the circumstances and influences under which the books of the Bible arose, and, in consequence, for the comprehension of the meaning of those books and of the true significance of their message to our own day. They believe that there is need of still further progress; that there is yet more knowledge, and light through knowledge, to be gained—and especially need of wider dissemination of knowledge already gained. They expect some changes, both in the opinions of scholars and in the opinions of thoughtful men and women generally. They anticipate that the children of the next generation will begin life with

conceptions of some matters pertaining to religion and the Bible somewhat different from those with which they themselves began. They welcome all progress that comes through larger knowledge. It is not for them to determine beforehand what is to be learned, and what direction progress shall take. Nor will they call all change progress. The old that is true—and they are persuaded that the heart of the old is true—they will seek to defend and conserve with all fidelity. They hold no brief for any new view. But they will seek ever to keep their faces to the light, in the confidence that all truth is good, the newly found equally with the long familiar.

But it is not only in the discovery and publication of knowledge that the editors will stand for progress. Even more shall we seek to promote progress in the application of biblical truth to the ethical and religious problems of personal and social life. It is men, not the Bible, that we would benefit. It is human life, not an educational discipline or a book, that we would serve. We are concerned for the Bible and the promotion of its study, because such study makes for human welfare through the application of truth discovered by it to human life. The needs of men are many and real. The problems of the hour, new and old, are pressing. If the experience of the Hebrew race recorded in the Bible, if the revelation of truth there made, can help men to right thinking and right living, students of the Bible cannot possibly content themselves with antiquarian investigation or historical results. There is doubtless a place for journals devoted exclusively to oriental archæology, but the *Biblical World* will not be in that class. Giving place from time to time to the results of exploration and discovery, it will never lose sight of the fact that learning is for life, not life for learning; and its deepest interest will be in promoting through knowledge, especially of the Bible, human welfare, nobler living. As in knowledge, so in respect to life, its face will be to the future, and its watchword will be "Onward."